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SPEECH

Delivered by

Rt. Hon.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier

P.C., G.C.M.G., M.P.

on the occasion of a
Banquet tendered by the

Montreal Reform Club

at the Windsor Hotel

Montreal



WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 1912

S P E E C H

DELIVERED BY

Rt. Hon. Sir WILFRID LAURIER
P.C., G.C.M.G., M.P.

On the occasion of a Banquet tendered by the
MONTREAL REFORM CLUB, at the Windsor Hotel,
Montreal, Wednesday, May 29, 1912.

When, earlier in the evening, I took my seat at this hospitable board and when my eye could take in and did take in the scene spread before me, when I saw this vast hall and this vast crowd in it, filling every inch of available space, I confess that a flood of tumultuous and grateful thoughts and sentiments arose in my bosom. I must at once add that uppermost was the feeling, the sense of pride at the sight of so many old friends, veterans like myself in the Liberal cause, who, to my certain knowledge, for a generation or more have given all their hearts and all their minds for the success of the Liberal cause, and who, in good report, and ill report, victorious or defeated, never wavered in their allegiance to its principles, to its ideals, and to its aspirations.

Their presence caught my eye, and it caught my eye because their presence is a testimony, if indeed testimony were needed, that these Liberal principles are eternally with us, and will live forever, and although they may be obscured by defeat, still they will revive brighter than before.

TO THE YOUNGER MEN.

But perhaps it is not the veterans whom I should the most cordially welcome on the present occasion. Perhaps I should rather welcome those younger friends, the sons of a newer generation—

most of them unknown to me personally, but whom I see here scattered in this audience, and with whom I feel in perfect communion—the communion of common aims and common purposes—aims and purposes to which we have dedicated our lives, and which they in their turn will take up and carry still further on the path of progress.

You, sir, are one of this younger generation, and let me at once offer you my congratulations upon your recent elevation to the supreme post of President of the Old Reform Club of Montreal. This election I look upon as a tribute; first, to your personal worth and likewise to the illustrious name which you have the honor to bear, and I look upon it further as an advance instalment of future services and future successes in a still more concrete sphere of political activity.

But even before this perhaps it would have been my duty to tender you and to tender to this assembly before me my heartfelt thank and my deep gratitude for the too kind words which you have spoken of me, and for the manner in which you, gentlemen, received these words from your Chairman.

CLAIMS NO GRATITUDE.

I claim no title at all to the gratitude of the Liberal party. I have given it my life, and a long life it has been; and whatever measure of success the party has met with under my leadership I claim no gratitude at all for it, nor even do I claim any merit. Whatever measures of success we have received is not due to me. It is due altogether to the excellence of the cause which I represented, and to the able assistance which I received from those who were associated with me.

You have referred, sir, a moment ago to the fact that we meet under the shadow of defeat, and perhaps had I been as wise as I might have been, and had I followed my own inclinations, on the morrow of the 21st of September, I should have gone back into private life, and handed over the reins to some younger and abler hands. But, sir, I am the servant of the people. And, since it was the wish of those with whom I was associated that I should retain the trust

which had been placed in my hands, I repeat, I am the servant of the people.

It matters not to me whatever is the post assigned to me. I am ready to serve as captain of the forces, or to serve as a private in the ranks, and whatever position I am called to fill I shall in the future, as I have done in the past, give to it the best of my heart, of my life, and of my ability.

I might repeat in the words of the Canadian poet:

My orders are to fight,
Then if I bleed or fail
Or strongly win, what matters it?
God only doth prevail.

The servant craveth naught
Except to serve with might.
I was not told to win or lose,
My orders are to fight.

LINCOLN'S MOTTO.

And fight I will: and fight you will, and so shall we all, in the sense in which fighting is meant under our British constitution. Fight we will with malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right. I borrow these words from that great and wise man, Abraham Lincoln, and I would wish that to be now and forever the motto of the Liberal party.

"Malice towards none," for none certainly. "Charity for all." We are willing to exercise at all times, "Firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right."—That is the privilege of free men.

We have met under the shadow of defeat, but I may tell you that I feel to-day undaunted. I have asked our friends in the late contest to follow my white plume. I may, perhaps, on the present occasion, renew the same request, to follow my white plume and I can tell them I shall never show the white feather.

I have often stated that it is our privilege to live under the

British institutions—and the British institutions are undoubtedly the best which has been devised by men for the government of men—British institutions are based on party government, and it is in the nature of party government that there should be an alteration in the administration of affairs by the different parties which divide the people.

Party Government, as we know, can be the highest conception and the highest exaltation of public duty, but party government may also be nothing more nor less than a mere scramble after office. Now, this is the charge that I have to make at the present time in regard to the men who are now in office at Ottawa.

If there were any Conservatives in this audience—I don't see many, but if there are a few perhaps they might be inclined to say the charge I make is too sweeping.

PRINCIPLES OR OFFICE.

I speak by authority; I speak by the book; I speak by the very declarations which have been made by the men now in office, not later than the last session.

Not later than the last session, when a question of principle arose, at least for some of them, we were told that they looked not to principle, but to office, and on one occasion, when a question was before the House, one of the Ministers of the day, Mr. Monk, Minister of Public Works, having to choose between his office on one side and the very principle which he had laid before the people of Quebec, told us that he was rivetted, bolted, barred, not to principle, but to office. Mark the words, "Rivetted, bolted, barred to office."

We have heard of men in this country and in other countries who were rivetted, bolted, barred to principle, but Mr. Monk is not of that class.

It is only a year ago or so when Mr. Monk was before the people of the Province of Quebec and was held up as an example for the youth of this country. The people of Quebec were told that he was the one man of all others in the representation at Ottawa who could be depended on at all times, and under all circumstances, to stand

by principle. He was trusted, he was tried, but he was not found adamant. He was found to be of the softest clay.

Mr. Monk is not the first man who was rivetted, bolted, barred to office. Men there have been of the same calibre before him, but whenever men of that class were found, generally they tried to cover their retreat under some arguments, but Mr. Monk came out cynically and told the people of Quebec and those who trusted in him, "Make no mistake. Principle is not my goal. I am rivetted, bolted, barred to office."

NOT ON THE MAIN ISSUE.

This brings me naturally to a review of the contest that we had some eight months ago. We appealed to the country upon the question of Reciprocity. It was not, however, the question of Reciprocity which was uppermost in the discussion that took place, in this Province at all events. There were other issues brought up which ought not perhaps to have been brought up, but which were brought up just the same, and if defeated we were not defeated on the main issue before the country, so far at all events, as this province was concerned, and I might say so far as the Province of Ontario was concerned. We were defeated by a combination of the most heterogeneous elements which could combine together for destruction, but which could never hold up together for construction.

We had against us the Conservative party led by Mr. Borden. That was natural. They were our natural antagonists. In addition to that we had against us the dissentient Conservatives led by Mr. Monk. We had against us the Nationalists, led by Mr. Bourassa. We had against us the Toronto jingoes led I don't know by whom. And, if I am correctly informed, and if we are to believe the words of Mr. Burnham, of Peterboro, the Ne Temere Decree also had something to do with the matter. What the exact connection was I don't know, but Mr. Burnham told us that the Ne Temere Decree was partly the cause of our defeat.

• ABOUT RECIPROCITY.

Perhaps it would not be altogether inconsistent or out of place to review here what was the attitude of the different parties on the

main question which was in issue before the Canadian people at the time.

As I told you a moment ago, we had our natural antagonists, the Conservative Opposition. But, if the Conservative Opposition were our natural antagonists they never were our natural antagonists upon the question of Reciprocity, because they had been just as much in favor of Reciprocity as we had been. Indeed, it had been part of their programme and platform for forty years and more.

In the year 1854, when Lord Elgin went to Washington to negotiate a Treaty of Reciprocity—a treaty which was, I might say, the same as our own agreement with the United States—he was then representing the Liberal Government of Sir Francis Hincks, but when a year after, that Treaty was ratified by the legislature of the day, in the old Colonial Legislature of Canada, as Canada existed at that time, it was not the Government of Sir Francis Hincks which asked for the ratification of the treaty, but it was the Coalition Government of Sir Allan Macnab, in which Sir John A. Macdonald (then young John A. Macdonald) was a prominent member.

Later on, after the treaty had been repealed, in 1866, and when Sir John A. Macdonald was at the helm of affairs, he sent delegation after delegation to Washington to obtain a renewal of it.

In 1877, when Sir John A. Macdonald introduced the famous resolution which was the origin of the National Policy, in principle as well as in idea, the object was to obtain a renewal of the treaty of Reciprocity.

Two years afterwards, Sir John having come into office, when the National Policy was put upon the Statute book, you remember that one of the features of the National Policy as then introduced was a permanent offer of Reciprocity with the United States in regard to natural products.

In 1891, Sir John A. Macdonald again endeavoured to have a renewal of the treaty of 1854, and in 1892 Sir John Thompson and Mr. Foster—our own George Eulas Foster—went to Washington again and again in order to obtain a renewal of the Treaty of Reciprocity.

WAS A SURPRISE.

But, what is perhaps more significant is this: In the year 1909, when we asked the Canadian Parliament to ratify our commercial

treaty with France, the Conservative party very reluctantly agreed to that ratification, and one of the reasons given, at that time, was the possibility that we might thereby injure a successful negotiation of a treaty with the United States. Well, sir, it is not surprising that when my friend, Mr. Fielding, in the month of January, 1911, laid before Parliament the agreement which he had just concluded with the American Government for an exchange of natural products between the two countries—it is not to be wondered at, that many members on the Conservative side rose in their places and cheered this agreement and it is not surprising that some of the other members on the Conservative side had to be held down by their coat tails in order to prevent them from similarly acclaiming it.

It is an open secret—so open that every one in Ottawa knows it—that at the caucuses of the Conservative party, which were held to ascertain whether or not the convention would be accepted, there was a great searching of hearts before their minds were at last made up to oppose the agreement. When it was ascertained that Mr. Sifton and some of the members of the Liberal party in the City of Toronto were opposed to the agreement, then from that date the Conservative party made up their minds to oppose it, and they turned just as complete a somersault as ever was turned in Barnum's circus.

Now, sir, that was the attitude of the regular Conservative party, headed by Mr. Borden.

MR. MONK'S ATTITUDE.

What was the attitude of the dissentient Conservative party, headed by Mr. Monk? There would perhaps be no need of referring to it here. You gentlemen of the Province of Quebec know that in the last election, and in the campaign which preceded it, the question of Reciprocity was not very much discussed by the dissentient Conservatives, headed by Mr. Monk. I followed the discussion very closely, and they had not much to say in regard to it. What concerned them especially was the naval question and the Manitoba School question.

The Manitoba School question, as we supposed, had been settled fifteen years ago, in so far as the Federal Government was concerned at all events. We were told by these gentlemen that the question was

not settled at all—that the Laurier-Greenway settlement was no settlement, and that if they (the Conservative party) were returned to power, then there would be a real settlement of the question.

On the naval question you also heard their pledges to the people. Let the Laurier Government be defeated, and the naval law will be wiped off the Statute books as soon as Parliament assembles.

That was the attitude of the dissentient Conservatives, led by Mr. Monk.

THE NATIONALISTS.

Now, what was the attitude of the Nationalist party, led by Mr. Bourassa?

As far as the Nationalist party and the Quebec Conservative party are concerned, for my part I never saw any difference between them. The policy of one was the policy of the other.

What was the attitude of the jingoes of Toronto? The naval policy was not satisfactory to them, but not for the reason given by the Nationalists. The latter opposed the very idea of a navy. The jingoes wanted a navy and a contribution to the Imperial navy.

As a consequence we had all these forces, from all points of the horizon coming upon us. They created a maelstrom under which we succumbed. Well, sir, for my part let me tell you once more that I have never regretted the result personally. I certainly regret it for the country, and we have reason to regret it. However, there is no cloud which may not have a silver lining, and in view of the events which have taken place since our defeat on the 21st of September, I do not know that there may not even be cause for some rejoicing. What is the compensation? The reason and the compensation is that if we have suffered defeat the consequence of our defeat has been to unmask the Nationalist and the Quebec Conservatives, and show them as they really are.

THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE.

Let me ask you a question. What is the difference between a Quebec Conservative and a Quebec Nationalist? I ask the question

because, so far as I am concerned, I do not know of any difference at all. If you scratch a Nationalist you are sure to find a Quebec Conservative, and if you scratch a Quebec Conservative you are sure to find a Nationalist.

The only difference is that before the elections to capture the vote in the Province of Quebec, they are all Nationalists, but after the elections they are all Conservatives—to get the patronage of the Government.

Men there were who took the Nationalists and the Quebec Conservatives at their word before the last election, and who thought that they were what they represented themselves to be. They denounced Laurier, as you know, but they denounced Borden as well as Laurier. Laurier was bad, but Borden was no better. They had nothing at all to do with Borden and did not want to have anything to do with him until Borden had patronage to give—commissionerships, collectorships, even messengerships. Then they ceased to be Nationalists, and they were all Conservatives. They were tamed; so tamed as to go and eat out of his hand and lick his fingers.

Men there were who supposed that Conservatives and Nationalists were actuated by noble motives, by principles, by high ideals, who supposed that after the election they would be as firm as they were before.

Men there were who believed that they would be like the German Centre in the Reichstag, under the leadership of Dr. Windhorst, and that would support no government unless that government would give them their ideals—in this case, the restoration of the separate schools in Manitoba, and the repeal of the naval law.

POOR DELUDED MEN.

Poor deluded men they were. They found their mistake when they saw their friends at work. They know now that the patriotism of the Nationalists and the patriotism of the Quebec Conservatives does not spring from the heart, but from the stomach. When their stomachs are full their hearts cease to beat, and their tongues are mute.

That is the lesson which the last election has taught us, and I say that perhaps it was worth being defeated. The Quebec people now

know that when men come before them and tell them that all questions which come before Parliament can be settled from the point of view of one Province, and one Province alone, irrespective of the views of the other Provinces, that these men are either charlatans or demagogues, if they are not both.

Eight months have elapsed since the last election, and, therefore, perhaps we are sufficiently removed from the heat and agitation of the contest to be able to review with calmness and impartial judgment the issue which was before the country at the time. Of course the main issue was the question of Reciprocity.

Perhaps the time has come when we may look upon that question and see what it meant, and what was the value of the objections which were made against it, and what is the policy now to be followed. I say we are sufficiently removed from the heat and the agitation of the contest to be able to look at the question squarely as it is, without bias, and without prejudice.

I need not remind you that on the Conservative side froth and fury took the place of argument and reasoning. I need not tell you that Reciprocity was presented by our opponents as the first step to annexation. I need not tell you that the contest was represented as one between two flags—between the American flag and the British flag. I need not tell you that in all the Conservative papers of this city, and the other cities throughout the Dominion there appeared every day dismal columns, under dismal headlines, out of which Conservative orators drew an endless torrent of tears and lamentations.

POSITION UNCHANGED.

In so far as such tactics were pursued, for my part, I stand again to-day as I did at that time, and I say that all such appeals to passion and prejudice are unworthy of serious men.

If it is still asserted that if we sell to the Americans wheat, cattle, apples, potatoes, fish, and lumber, we must as a necessary consequence sell them our allegiance, our nationality, our citizenship, our birthright, such an argument may scare Mr. Borden, Mr. Foster, or Mr. Monk, but it cannot scare me, nor do I believe it can scare any Canadian worthy of the name.

But, sir, let us come to the crux of this question. I know that the contention of the Conservative party during the last election has been revived by a letter of President Taft, addressed to Mr. Roosevelt, recently published but written whilst the negotiations were under way, in which he held out the view that if consummated, reciprocity would make Canada an adjunct of the United States.

I need not tell you, gentlemen, it was to be expected that such a letter would be taken up by all those who are opposed to reciprocity. In fact, it was natural that it should be so. The Conservative party seized upon it with glee, and triumphantly quoted it to us as a justification of their attitude, and as confirmation of their sinister predictions.

THE WORD "ADJUNCT."

Now, I have looked at this letter carefully and so have you, and in that letter there was nothing new. We were familiar with every word that was in it. We have heard the word "adjunct" before. We had seen it in the literature, and heard it in the oratory of the Conservative party. As a matter of fact, when President Taft wrote that letter he invented nothing at all. He himself admits that he simply repeats what was said by the Canadian jingoes. Indeed, he confesses that he has borrowed this idea and this expression from the Canadian Tories.

I want to discuss that question before my fellow-countrymen, and I want to discuss it, in the face of Heaven, in all its bearings, because I am satisfied that we were in the right, in the position we took.

Here are Mr. Taft's words, addressed to Mr. Roosevelt:—

"In the meantime the amount of Canadian products we would take would produce a current of business between Western Canada and the United States and would make Canada naturally an adjunct to the United States. I see this is an argument against reciprocity made in Canada, and I think it is a good one."

There you see Mr. Taft candidly admits that he took the argument from the Canadian Tories. He saw that the Canadian Tories could appeal to the passions and prejudice of some of the Canadian people; he thought that he too might appeal to the passion and prejudice of the American people in favor of Reciprocity. This only goes to show

you, gentlemen, that on one side of the line as on the other side of the line, human nature is much the same, and there are weak parts everywhere.

I was in the United States when this letter of Mr. Taft's was published. I happened to be visiting some personal friends, and I was asked my opinion of it. I said to my friends that I did not care to express an opinion then and there. When I came back to Canada I was again asked the same question and I said what I say now, that I was surprised, and I am surprised that a man of Mr. Taft's eminence should borrow such shallow rhetoric from Canadian jingoes.

The funny part of it was that it has created such a commotion in Canada. That letter was addressed to Mr. Roosevelt, but it did not convince him. Mr. Taft began his letter "My dear Theodore," but Mr. Roosevelt did not respond in the same confidential or endearing terms, neither did he respond to the idea that the Reciprocity agreement would make Canada an adjunct to the United States. Thus he answered "Dear Mr. President. It seems to me that what you propose to do with Canada is admirable from every standpoint. I firmly believe in free trade with Canada for both economic and political reasons." No annexation thought.

He did not go further than that. When later, after the publication of the correspondence, he was questioned as to what he meant by "political reasons," he was careful to say that these reasons were perfectly honorable to Canada and the United States. He had his secretary cable these words to London: "When Mr. Roosevelt used the words 'political reasons,' he had not the slightest thought of the annexation of Canada or of her subordination to the United States."

Take the fact that Mr. Taft imagined Reciprocity with Canada would lead Canada to be an adjunct of the United States, and the opinion of Mr. Roosevelt that the agreement would have no such effect, and what have you? Mr. Roosevelt is as good an authority as is Mr. Taft. You have to make your choice between them. So far as I am concerned I stand by the interpretation of Mr. Roosevelt, which is more in accordance with the facts, and with the theory of a commercial treaty.

However, there is something else. Reciprocity, which, according to this letter of Mr. Taft's, was to make Canada an adjunct to the United States, was opposed just as vehemently in that country as it was in

Canada. The American lumbermen, the American fishermen, the

American farmers all denounced the agreement as a sacrifice of American interests. Moreover, it is an open secret (so open that everyone knows it), that all during the last election, when we were in the heat of the contest, and when every nerve was strained by both sides, special interests in the United States joined hands with the special interests in Canada to defeat Reciprocity, both singing lustily and loudly "God Save the King," and both murmuring to one another and the people save our monopolies and our trusts.

Let me go one step further. If there are yet men in Canada who believe that the words of Mr. Taft must be taken literally, and that any commercial agreement with the United States for the exchange of natural products would make Canada an adjunct of the United States, let me make these observations to them. I am sure no one will dispute the fact that friendship between nations is the greatest blessing that God can give to the world. No one will dispute that trade and commerce are perhaps the most potent agents to maintain friendship between nations. No one will dispute that commercial treaties are one of the most powerful instruments to that end.

TO GREATER FRIENDSHIP.

When we received the invitation of the United States Government to enter into an agreement for the exchange, without hindrance, of natural products between the two nations, we had those truths before us, and we accepted the invitation in the full belief that even an agreement would lead to greater friendship between us, and that the result would be mutually honorable between the two peoples—mutually profitable, economically and politically, in the words of Mr. Roosevelt.

Commercial treaties are not of this day, nor are they of yesterday. Commercial treaties between nations are as old as civilization itself, and I have yet to learn that commercial treaties have ever led to the absorption of one nation by another. On the contrary, my reading of history convinces me that the effect has always been to make two nations more friendly toward one another and more respected by one another.

That was our sentiment, and that was the sentiment of Mr. Knox, the Secretary of State of the United States, who negotiated the convention with my friend, Mr. Fielding. When Mr. Fielding represented to him, in the correspondence with which every one is familiar, that

such an agreement would have the result I have indicated, Mr. Knox said he thoroughly agreed with every word of it.

In the face of that if the President of the great republic had in his mind any secret which he never indicated to us that such an agreement would lead to the absorption of Canada by the United States, I have only to say that Mr. Taft that he very little knew the character of the Canadian people.

NEVER AN ADJUNCT.

If Mr. Taft, the President of the great American Republic (perhaps the mightiest nation in the world to-day), harbored in his mind the thought that by making this agreement between us he could make Canada an adjunct of the United States, I have only to tell him that Canada cannot be made an adjunct of the American Republic except with the consent of the Canadian people. I have to say further to Mr. Taft that the consent of the Canadian people cannot be obtained by all the profits of that trade—nay, by all the wealth of the United States. I have to say also that whether we trade or whether we do not trade with our neighbours, Canadians we are, and Canadians we shall be.

Let me go further into this. If there are still Canadians who think that we cannot enter into such an agreement with our neighbours (though the object of trade is profit and advantage to those who trade) for political reasons, I would simply tell them that their objection carries with it the deepest humiliation which can be conveyed. I ask you seriously, are we to be told that we cannot trade with any nation on earth, no matter what it is, the United States, or any other, without endangering our political independence? Are we to be told (as is implied by the objection which we hear to-day, and have heard since the publication of President Taft's letter), that the only basis upon which we can maintain our dignity as a nation, and our independence as a people, is by keeping a non-commercial intercourse with the American Republic? For my part I say away with all such debasing thoughts. We are more manly than that.

APPEAL TO CONSERVATIVES.

Might I ask here a few questions of our Conservative friends? I was told a moment ago that there were a few Conservatives in the room.

I wish there were more. But, if my words could go beyond these walls—if they could go to every household inhabited by Conservatives—men whose opinions I respect—I would ask them a few questions.

In the first place I would ask, when Lord Elgin went to Washington to negotiate the treaty of 1854 did he imagine for one instant that he was putting the independence of the Canadian people in jeopardy? When Sir Allan Macnab's Government (in which the strongest man was Sir John A. Macdonald) asked for the ratification of the treaty, did they suspect that the Canadian people would not be able to maintain their nationality against the Americans? When Sir John A. Macdonald introduced the National Policy in 1877 and asserted that it would lead to Reciprocity, did he think that there would be men whose allegiance would not be strong enough to permit of them trading with the Americans?

All such questions simply invite the answer that no one ever supposed, until 1911, that trading with our neighbors would jeopardize our manhood. If the idea of danger to our allegiance is still present in us, I have simply to say that the man whose allegiance is so frail, so feeble, so limping, so puny, are not, thank God, to be found in the ranks of the Liberal party. If there are such men in the ranks of the Conservative party, I leave them to Mr. Borden, to Mr. Foster, and to Mr. Monk to deal with. But, as far as the Liberal party is concerned, speaking with the authority which it has given me for the last twenty-four or twenty-five years, I can say that our allegiance is more virile, more vigorous—to put it in one word, more British.

ARGUMENT SHAMES CANADIANS.

I confess to you, sir, that I cannot hear such arguments without some indignation, and shame, as a Canadian. If you tell me that we should not have Reciprocity because of economic reasons, I am ready to discuss the matter with you. Upon this question and all others there may be room for argument, although, in my humble opinion, the argument is all on one side on this point. But, if you tell me that we cannot enter into a commercial treaty with any nation on earth because by doing so we imperil our political independence, then I repel such an argument with abhorrence. The argument that because we trade with foreign

nations we may lose our political independence is an argument which is repellent to one's common sense and one's self-respect and sense of honor.

I know there are men in this country—men with whom I associate every day—on the Conservative side, who believe that we should not have gone into this agreement for economic reasons. With such men I am prepared to discuss and perhaps even at this late date to meet their objections.

We were told last year that we should not go into a commercial agreement with the United States for the exchange of natural products alone, because if such an agreement were put into force Canadians would have the worst of it. Let me give you the specific reasons which were advanced in support of that.

MR. TAFT'S LETTER.

I have already quoted part of Mr. Taft's letter to you. I will take you back over the same ground. Mr. Taft says:—

"In the meantime, the amount of Canadian products we would take would produce a current of business between Western Canada and the United States." Of course, on this we all agree. It would create a current of trade. That was the very object we had in view. Mr. Taft goes on to say:—

"It would transfer all that important business to Chicago and New York, with their bank credits and everything."

I would like Mr. Taft to explain to me, or to any one else, why, if we buy from the United States or sell to them, it would mean the transferring of our bank accounts to the American side of the line. This is something that passes my poor comprehension.

I know one thing, and that is to-day our trade is four hundred and seventy-five millions of dollars—and thank the Lord for it—and thank the Laurier Government also. Our trade with the United States has increased four fold during the last sixteen years, but I have yet to learn that in consequence of this increase we have carried our bank balance to the other side of the line.

NO AMERICAN BANKS HERE.

Money does not recognize any customs duties, nor international lines, and I know something which President Taft ought to know, but which he seems to have lost sight of, and that is that there is not a single American Bank doing business in Canada, whereas there are at least thirty different places where Canadian banks are doing business in the United States.

Can any one explain to me if a man at the foot of the Rocky Mountains sends a load of cattle to Chicago he will receive his money in any other method than the usual one—a draft from Chicago on Calgary or Edmonton? Do you believe that because a man sends a cargo of wheat to the United States he must necessarily send his bank account to Chicago or any other part of the United States? If any Canadian wants to do his banking in the United States now there are a dozen Canadian banks carrying on business there, who would be pleased to deal with him.

Arguments of this kind with which we have long been familiar, do not derive any more strength from being repeated by Mr. Taft. They seem to me quite unworthy of him.

President Taft goes on to say:—

“This increase of business would increase greatly the demand in Canada for our manufacturers.”

ARGUMENT A FALLACY.

That argument would be unanswerable if the treaty arrangement had taken in manufactured products as well as natural products, but as our agreement only dealt with natural products, the manufacturers of the Americans would be met at the frontier by the Canadian customs duties, just as they are to-day, so this argument has no application.

A moment ago I gave you the different instances when Canadians went to Washington to obtain a Reciprocity agreement with the United States. If on any of these occasions the Minister of Finance at the time had brought such an agreement as my friend Mr. Fielding brought last year it would have been received with universal acceptance. Why is it then that the Canadian people rejected in 1911 what they would have been glad to have at all times previous to 1896? The reason is this

(and it is a great tribute to the Laurier Government), that there has been a new spirit in Canada—a spirit of Canadian strength, Canadian honor, and Canadian vigor.

CREATED CANADIAN SENTIMENT.

When everything has been said against us, there remains to the credit of the Laurier Government that we have done more to create a Canadian sentiment in Canada than was ever done by any other Government. We have established Canada before the world. We have revealed Canada to Canada itself. Nay, we did more—we were not satisfied with creating a Canadian sentiment. We fully recognized the necessity of obtaining larger markets for Canadian products, and we applied at once with a fair measure of success to obtain such markets.

You talk to-day of the home market. This is an expenditure of mis-spent energy. The home market is certainly the best of all. It is better than the English market; better than the American market; better than the French market; better than the German market, or any other market, but at the same time there is this fact to be recognized, that the Canadian market cannot absorb the whole of the natural products of Canada.

Let us take wheat as an instance. Last year the wheat crop fit for human food was about one hundred and thirty million bushels. How much of that crop can Canada absorb? Canada cannot absorb more than sixty-five or seventy million bushels at the outside (fifty million for food and fifteen or twenty million bushels for seed). Our population is not more than 7,000,000, and if the consumption per head of population is put as seven bushels of wheat, we find that we can only use about fifty million bushels for food and at the outside twenty million bushels for seed, or altogether not more than seventy million bushels. Now where would the other 60,000,000 bushels go? You must find markets abroad.

MADE ENGLISH MARKET.

We have the English market, the best of all next to the home market, but, if the English market is what it is to-day it is due to the

Laurier Government and to the Fielding tariff of 1897. The British Preference has doubled our exports to Great Britain during the past fifteen years. The British preference has been a boon to Canada, a boon to England, and a boon to the British Empire, in every sense of the word. At the present time I am only speaking of it as a commercial proposition. It has done a great deal for this country in the way of advertising, and has forced the English people to take almost three times as much of our products as they did in 1896.

The same thing applies to the French market. We negotiated a treaty with France—not that there is much in the French market for us, but everything counts. The same thing may be said of the German market. Germany attempted to bully us, but strong as she was she could not succeed, and when she offered to reverse her policy and to open the gates on her side as on our side, we were ready to meet her.

The offer of the American people to trade with us was not accepted by our people, because of the very sentiment which we had created. The national spirit which we had evoked was aroused. It was strong and proud of its strength, and yet it would not and did not trust its strength. That is the only reproof which I have against the business men of Canada, that they feared American competition. Analyse what took place last year and you will find that there is the secret of the rejection of Reciprocity. Oh! ye of little faith! Oh! ye Canadian business men, who refused to open wide the avenues of trade, I have more faith in you than you have in yourselves.

EQUAL TO AMERICANS.

Will you tell me that Canadians are not the equals of Americans? Will you tell me that in a fair field we cannot compete with them and hold our own against them? Until you tell me that Canadians are not the equals of Americans, I refuse to believe that we made a mistake last year.

There was before us last year, and there is before us this year this same problem of larger markets. The agreement which we proposed last year would have largely solved that problem, but it was rejected by the Canadian people. I am a Constitutionalist, and therefore I have to accept the verdict. However, that problem is still

here, just as it was last year. Not only is it still here, but it is more acute than it was last year.

The problem of larger markets is an important problem in the east, but it is more important in the west. Larger markets for the provinces east of Lake Superior are an advantage apparent to everybody, but in the provinces west of Lake Superior—in the prairie provinces, larger markets are an indispensable necessity. How shall I prove it? Let me appeal to your judgment and your experience. We have been pouring population into the Western Provinces. Every year thousands, and hundreds of thousands of acres of virgin soil are brought under cultivation. Last year the wheat crop fit for human food was about 130,000,000 bushels. This year, if Providence blesses us at all, our wheat crop will be at least 200,000,00 bushels. Where will the crop go?

MR. BENNETT AND TREASON.

You have had here in the City of Montreal within the last three months a gentleman who came to lecture before the Canadian Club on the conditions existing in the Prairie Provinces. I will give you his name, Mr. Bennett, Conservative member for the City of Calgary. Mr. Bennett told you that unless the Northwest provinces had a larger outlet for their crops he would not answer for their allegiance. Did you hear that or did you not hear it?

If a statement of that kind had come from me, or from any of the men whom I see here associated with me, belonging to the Liberal party, it would have been branded as treason. However, it came from a Conservative member of Parliament, a strong Imperialist. Coming from this source, his word could not be mistrusted. He told you plainly that he would not answer for the allegiance of the Northwest unless they were provided with larger outlets for their crops. He told you there was a possibility of secession. I do not believe it myself, but Mr. Bennett made the statement, not I.

HOW BORDEN MET PROBLEM.

There is something more than this. The problem of larger markets and of larger outlets was upon us last year. We wished to solve it in the way I have indicated, but the people would not have it so.

This same problem was upon the new Government when they came into office, on the tenth of October last. At that time there was a crop which had just been threshed lying on the ground, waiting for transportation. The inclemency of the season threatened it with destruction—in fact destroyed some of it. There was a market almost at arms length, but that market was closed by a high tariff and high freight rates. The Government was deluged with petitions. They did not know what to do. What do you suppose that Conservative Government did? That Government which had just been brought into office on the cry of “no intercourse at all with the United States. The trade must flow east and west, not north and south.”

If, during the contest last year, I had come here and told you gentlemen of Montreal, if you defeat the Reciprocity agreement, which will open the American markets to the products of the northwest provinces, the new Government—the Conservative administration—will be forced to go to the United States and ask as an act of grace for the introduction of your products into the United States—if I said that to you you would have told me that I was a humbug. There would have been a cry of indignation.

Well, sir, the very thing which you would have denounced as humbug on my part, and which would have made you shudder, has been done by the present Government.

As I say, these petitions came to the Government, representing that the crop was lying in the fields, and that there was no outlet for it—that the Canadian railways were choked and would not transfer it to the east. They could not take it to Fort William or Port Arthur. What happened? What was done by the present Government—the Government for which you, my fellow countrymen of the Conservative persuasion, defeated the Reciprocity agreement, which would have opened up to you by law the doors of the American market? Your Government went to Washington and asked the Interstate Commission for permission to carry the crops to Minneapolis and Duluth upon terms equal to and not higher than the terms upon which the crops were carried from Winnipeg to Port Arthur and Fort William.

WHEN FOSTER BEGGED.

If, gentlemen of the Conservative persuasion tell me that I am slandering the Canadian Government, or that the Canadian Government

is incapable of going to Washington to ask for favors, I simply say to them that I have here in my hand the words delivered on the floor of the House of Commons by Mr. Foster—yes, our own George Eulas Foster—in the month of January last. Mr. Foster had made the welkin ring with his denunciation of the want of Canadian patriotism shown by the Liberals. I have here the report of Mr. Foster's speech, saying that he went to the Interstate Commission begging them—not as we did—openly asking favor for favor and term for term, but with his hat in his hand he asked the Interstate Commission to please give them permission to carry the Canadian crops to Minneapolis and Duluth upon terms equal to the terms on which the crops were carried from Winnipeg to Port Arthur and Fort William.

I do not know if there are any of you who remember the meeting held at the Monument Nationale, the day before the elections I think, yes, in fact, it was the twentieth of September. Our old friend, Sir William Van Horne, spoke on that occasion. He has been punished enough for it since, so I will not deal very harshly with him.

WENT HAT IN HAND.

Sir William Van Horne told you that he was not a politician, but rather a business man. He objected to Reciprocity because it would take the trade from the west and east route and deviate it to the south. I would like to know if any of you could then imagine that the Government, which was to be installed after the defeat of the Laurier Government, would be forced by the natural condition of things to go to Washington, hat in hand, and ask the Interstate Commission to grant it the special favor of carrying our crops to Duluth and Minneapolis, instead of Fort William and Port Arthur.

Here is what Mr. Foster said on the subject, on the 23rd of January: "As a means of relief something has been done—" Mind you the crop was there, rotting on the ground. Neither the C. P. R., the Canadian Northern, nor the Grand Trunk Pacific could take it to Fort William or Port Arthur. Something had to be done. What did Mr. Foster do?

"I took it upon myself to ask the representative of the three great railways to meet here in Ottawa," (Mr. Foster could not do anything

without asking the permission of the three great railways), "three weeks or a month ago, when this matter became very urgent, and as a result of their conference application has been made to the Interstate Commerce Commission of the United States for leave—" (imagine Mr. Foster going to Washington asking for leave. Ah, if Mr. Fielding had done anything of the kind, how the welkin would have resounded with denunciation of him!) "for leave to lessen the grain rates to Minneapolis and Duluth, and so ease the pressure by taking the grain down towards the south."

"On the 7th of February, Mr. Foster spoke again on this question. He said he had asked for leave, and that leave had been given to carry the wheat to Minneapolis and Duluth. Here is his exact language:

"Speaking generally, wheat and oats for export, wheat, oats, and flax for consumption in the United States are either being carried at present at an equal or slightly higher rate to Duluth and Minneapolis than obtain to Port Arthur and Fort William, but by the latter part of February will be carried at the same rate as to Fort William and Port Arthur."

JUSTIFIES LIBERAL POLICY.

I ask you, gentlemen, who is the man who would blame us for having thought of obtaining by mutual reciprocal agreement what Mr. Foster had to ask as a favor from the American Government and the American people? Sir, if I wanted any justification of our policy, surely I would have it in this fact.

I know my friend, Mr. Foster, very well. I am sure it was a bitter pill for him to swallow to have to go hat in hand to the Interstate Commerce Commission and ask them to give him leave to carry our wheat through their territory.

We did the thing differently. We thought we would do it in a manly way, working our trade on equal terms. We were turned down and now you see the result.

Of course, this is not the solution of the problem. It is only a makeshift. The problem will be there again. It is there at the present time in Manitoba, in Saskatchewan, and in Alberta. So much so that Mr. Bennett tells you they must have more outlets or he will not answer for the allegiance. So far as I am concerned, I can answer for their

allegiance. I am not afraid of this. All these men are British subjects. They are of the British race. They want to work, and expect to have a market for their products—not by leave of any foreign country, but by the action of their own Government. That is the policy of the Liberal party.

TRYING PRENTICE HAND.

Only last week Mr. Foster addressed a meeting before the Board of Trade and told the merchants of Montreal the very same truth as I have just tried to tell you. He said, "You must have larger markets." Mr. Foster has been trying his "prentice hand" (old though he be) at the work of getting larger markets.

Last year our market with the United States amounted to four hundred and seventy-five million dollars. He refused to deal with them, but he negotiated a treaty with the West Indies—a trade which amounts to how much? Is it one hundred million dollars? Oh, no! Fifty million dollars? No. Twenty-five million dollars? No. It is not even ten million dollars. It is about nine million dollars.

Now, I do not blame Mr. Foster for negotiating that treaty. I commend his action. Mr. Foster blamed my friend, Mr. Fielding, because he said he had negotiated his treaty secretly, but how has Mr. Foster negotiated his? He has not discussed it in any other way than Mr. Fielding. Of course, it could not be done otherwise, and I am not blaming him for it, but, in the meantime, I have to leave it to you to see for yourselves what the Borden Government has been able to do in regard to solving the most important problem before the Canadian people.

ONLY TICKLED SURFACE.

Mr. Foster went to the Interstate Commerce Commission and obtained a special rate from that commission to allow Duluth and Minneapolis to compete with Fort William and Port Arthur. I do not blame him for it, but that was only a scratch—no, it was only tickling the surface of the problem. It was not solving it, in any sense of the word.

I am reminded of Beau Brummel, who, when asked if he was a

vegetarian, answered "Yes, I am a vegetarian, I once ate a pea." That is the extent to which the present Government of Canada is solving the problem of larger markets—the extent of one pea. That is all they have done in one year.

During the first twelve months we were in office we gave the Canadian people the British preference. The Borden Government has given the Canadian people one pea.

I told you in opening that we had been defeated by a combination of the most heterogeneous elements—elements which combined together could destroy, but could not construct. Here you have an evidence of the truth of my statement. They could destroy, but they cannot construct.

But they were so busy otherwise that perhaps they had no thoughts on these important problems. You must give the devil his due, and you must give the Government its due also. It is entitled to as much as the devil. The present Government has been very busy in some respects—very busy spending money.

LIKE A YOUNG RAKE.

In my appreciation the present Government is very much like a young rake who has been unexpectedly called to an estate long administered by careful hands, and, who, dazzled and bewildered by his sudden good fortune, plunges his hand deep into the accumulated treasures, and scatters them broadcast, east and west, in a very excess of riotous extravagance to make up for a long period of enforced abstemiousness.

That is the condition of the Government. After a long term in opposition, finding a full treasury, thanks to the administration of a competent Government, they have put their hands deep into the coffers and scattered the contents to the winds, and all the time they have been doing this they have been making dismissals and appointments.

They were not one day in office when there stormed upon them a host of applicants for office, coming as thick as the locusts in Egypt. Their time was taken up making dismissals and making appointments. The job was so heavy on their hands that they appointed commissions to help them. They appointed no less than forty-one commissions to make dismissals, and the more dismissals they make the more applicants they

have. The other day, in New Brunswick, Mr. Foster, surrounded, besieged, buttonholed, suffocated, uttered a cry of despair. "This is a damnable system." I agree with him. It is a damnable system, when damnably administered. But, the remedy is at hand, and Mr. Foster would have no difficulty if he adopted it.

APPOINTMENTS BY MERIT.

I remember, very long ago, when Mr. Foster was in opposition, he stated that all appointments ought to be made on merit. If appointments are made by merit, as they were under the previous Government, Mr. Foster's days and the days of his colleagues would be no longer damnable, but would be as serene as our days were.

Mr. Foster, however, is a very good preacher, but I am afraid that he will not practice as well as he preaches, and that he will continue to say "This is a damnable system," but he will not have the courage to put an end to it.

NAVAL POLICY.

There is, perhaps, another question to which I should draw your attention for a moment, simply for the novelty of the thing. I refer to the naval question. The novelty of the thing I say, for previous to the last election nothing else was talked of by the Conservative party in this province, now they are as dumb as fish. It was not the trade question that was discussed before the people of the Province of Quebec during the campaign. It was the naval question.

Three years ago I was Prime Minister. We had the reins of government in our own hands. We brought before the House of Commons a resolution to the effect that Canada having reached the status she has reached—the status of a nation—should assume all the duties and all the responsibilities of a nation. Now, the duties and the responsibilities of a nation are to take care of its own defense by land and sea. That resolution was unanimously adopted in the House of Commons.

ABOUT MR. MONK.

Mr. Borden spoke in favor of the resolution, and even suggested to me an amendment, which I accepted. Mr. Monk, the leader of the dissentient Conservatives in this province, did not speak in favor of it, but he told us he was in favor of it, and that he did vote for it. We did not perceive it at the time, but he told us later on that he voted for it by going to bed. That is one way of voting for a proposition, but we will not quarrel with him. If he chooses to manifest his support to a proposition by going to bed, well, all I have to say is every one to his own taste. That is not the way in which I would show my approval, but thank the Lord my views are different from Mr. Monk's views on this question, and on many others.

In any event, Mr. Borden was in favor of the resolution, and Mr. Monk was in favor of it. But, the following year, when we brought in a measure to put that resolution into execution, in the way we thought right as carrying out our duties as British subjects, and our rights as Canadians, why every one was against it. Mr. Borden was against it. Mr. Monk was against it. Mr. Borden and Mr. Monk agreed to destroy. They could not agree to construct. Mr. Monk was against it because we had gone too far—because we should not do anything at all. Mr. Borden was against it because we did not go far enough. Both of them agreed that the law we had put on the statute book should be repealed immediately.

Our Government was defeated, and everybody in this province expected that the law would be repealed. I expected it, in my innocence. I crave pardon from Heaven for giving them too much credit. I thought they would repeal the naval law, seeing that both sides had pledged themselves to its repeal. However, they did not do anything of the kind.

GOVERNMENT SAID "STAND."

The Session was called and day after day we expected a notice on the paper for the repeal of the naval law. Weeks passed, and months passed, but there was no sign of the repeal of the law. One day a young member of the Conservative side of the House put a notice on the paper asking the Government whether it was their intention to repeal the naval law. The question was there for days, weeks, and months, and every-

time it was called the Prime Minister said "Stand." He was not prepared with an answer. As I told you, these men could destroy, but they can not construct.

This young member had been a real lion during the campaign, but before the House he was a gentle lamb. At last the question was approached and the news given out that after the Session was over the Prime Minister and the Minister of Marine and Fisheries would go to England to consult the Admiralty. The Session closed and on the 1st of April or thereabouts, and as the weeks passed we expected an announcement that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Marine and Fisheries would go to England. About ten days ago there was a semi-official statement in the ministerial papers to the effect that Mr. Borden, Prime Minister, and the Minister of Marine and Fisheries were not going to England. Something passed during the interval because this morning we read that they are at last going. I wish them joy, and I hope they will do something.

You know what our policy is, and it was said some days ago by Mr. Churchill, the First Lord of the Navy, that the policy would commend itself to the British people, as I believe it commends itself to the judgment of the Canadian people.

SOMEONE MUST EAT LEEK.

One thing I know and that is that the present Government cannot construct upon this question unless someone has to eat the leek, as happened last Session upon the Manitoba School question.

Upon all these questions, in a country like Canada, no one can attempt a solution from the point of view of one province alone. Upon such questions the provinces are not broad enough. You have to take in the whole of Canada, and the whole of the Canadian people. You must appeal to the best instincts of every man, irrespective of his creed, race

What has been our policy in the past, it is now and will ever remain our policy. We know by the teaching of history and by our own recent experience that questions and problems arise which have to be taken up by the men in office, whoever they may be. We know that the solution provided by a Government (although it may be the best under the circumstances) sometimes fails to command the appreciation of the people or nationality.

for whose benefit it is intended. History, and our own experience have taught us that it is no uncommon fate for reformers to suffer dire penalty for their courage and their foresight. When Mr. Gladstone undertook, by meeting the sentiments of the Irish people for local government, to settle the Irish problem, and to make Ireland a contented, happy, and proud member of the United Kingdom and of the British Empire, he had to suffer, and did suffer the penalty of his courage and his foresight. He suffered the loss of friends, the loss of popularity, the loss of power, but he sowed deep in the ground, and he laid the foundation of eternal gratitude not only in the hearts of the Irish people, but in the hearts of the British subjects all over the world. He did not live to see the full fruition of his labor, but we are now witnesses of his labors coming to fruit.

HAVE SOWN WELL.

We, too, in our humble way, and with our modest force, we have sown seed in the ground. We had to champion causes which were not immediately popular, such as the establishment of the Canadian navy. We have had to suffer the penalty of our courage and foresight. We have lost friends. We have lost power. We have lost popularity. So far as I am concerned, however, I tell you again that I regret nothing.

The seed will still germinate. Happier than Gladstone, it may be my lot to see it reach its full maturity; but that is not with me the supreme consideration. The supreme consideration I have given to you at the beginning, and I give it to you at the end—"My orders are to fight."



